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CLASS AND CASTE

IV. EQUALIZATION

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A powerful motive is ever at work to stereotype social inequalities. In order to secure for their descendants the inheritance of a good place in society, the high are in a tacit conspiracy to rear barriers against the irruption of ability from below. A man who has a title, a high office, or an honorable function will keep it in his family line, if he can. However proud he may be of having risen by his own efforts, the "self-made" man generally leaves his money to his son, although by so doing he spoils his son's chance to "make" himself. With rare exceptions the successful have done their best to perpetuate in their families their every social advantage, even if they had to deform the system which let them succeed.

As we have seen, such a closed upper castle soon becomes a sham. Robes, titles, pomp, and state cannot hide from the shrewd eye the growing mediocrity of the so-called "best." From the eugenic standpoint the hereditary ease of the privileged families is quite the worst thing that could befall them, for it enables their fools to survive and multiply. The whole theory of caste shatters on the iron fact that achievers are not mating with their like and hence do not transmit their gifts undiminished to their sons. In truth, the leading element in a healthy democracy, recruited, as it is, from every stratum, more nearly comprises "the best people" than a titular nobility. A society following an élite made up of those who have met successfully all tests, of many who have come up under heavy handicap, is more truly "aristocratic" than one ruled by a privileged order.

Who resist the endeavor of the successful to warp the social system toward status? Who level the barriers they have raised? Certainly not the ignorant and inert masses. The nether strata of

a caste system are quite too short-sighted to make sacrifices to keep the gangways open for the ascent of their posterity. They will be found more intent on some immediate benefit—bread and circuses, largess and festivals—than on opportunities for their children. How often conservatives have won the votes of the populace with money, drinks, or shows! It is *the middle class*, which has at once the wit to assault the doors of opportunity and the capacity to fill the posts to which they admit, that fights in the forefront of the battle for the restoration of competition, although it is reinforced as layer after layer of the common people is enlightened.

An early step toward competition is to wrest the control of the state from the upper class and to make it a civic or community institution. The feudal state knows subjects, not citizens, and these subjects are subordinate to magnates rather than to the state itself. The civic state tolerates no intermediate powers between it and the citizen, allows no personal fealty to take precedence over one's civic obligation, and bears upon the individual directly, instead of leaving him under the jurisdiction of his social superior. The state suppresses the superior's right to judge and punish, to coin money, to keep armed men, and to wage private war. Public offices are no longer inherited, but are intrusted to those who are loyal to the state rather than to their order. The making of law is wrenched from the hands of the upper caste and shared among the strong and rising elements in society. Then begins the unbuilding of the rampart of privilege and the recognition in the inferior of rights which enable him to show what pith there is in him.

PERSONAL FREEDOM

Inequality depends greatly on how much power the law allows one human being to have over another. Is the husband at liberty to chastise, let, or sell his wife? Can the parent sell his child or bind it out during its minority or control its marriage? Does a debt or other obligation descend automatically to one's children? Is responsibility for it shared by one's kinsmen? Can the creditor seize the person of the delinquent debtor, cast him into prison,

hold him to labor, or sell him? Is the son bound to follow the ancestral calling?

Even under slavery the status of the slave greatly varies. Sometimes the master is complete owner of the unfree, so that nothing he can do to him is unlawful; but in other cases the unfree has only a few duties to pay his master. Between these extremes there is every stage. In the heyday of ancient slavery the slave had, in the eye of the law, no rights of any kind. He could not frequent the gymnasium or the public assembly nor follow certain arts—all these being reserved to the freeman. He could not atone for an offense with a fine; he must “pay with his body,” i.e., be whipped. He could not testify save under torture, i.e., he “spoke with his body.” But in time the law curtailed the master in punishing his slave and gave the slave the right to support, the right to hold property, and to dispose of it by will. The serf, who, being attached to the farm (*adscriptus glebae*), could not be sold from home and family, was in a better position than the slave, who was a chattel.

The substitution of fixed dues in work or money for the serf’s unlimited obligation to serve his lord was an easement. Then doors of escape opened—manumission, purchase of one’s freedom, military service, living for a year and a day in a borough. But then, for fear one parish might have to support a pauper chargeable on another, England passed acts of settlement which for two hundred years tied poor men down to selling their labor to local employers, because they were liable to be ejected from a strange parish. In England even into the nineteenth century traces of serfdom survived in the system of agricultural labor under year contract, with imprisonment for the laborer who broke his contract. On the Continent the rootage of domestic service in serfdom was long manifest in the employment of servants by the year, with imprisonment or holding back of wages as a means of enforcement.

In the American colonies the system of indentured apprenticeship amounted to term serfdom. In the second quarter of the last century the new legal principle that failure to pay a debt cannot impair one’s personal freedom cut the nerve of imprisonment for debt, and in 1867 peonage was made unlawful. The refusal of American law to require specific performance of the contract to

perform labor saves men from being tied down by a promise made in a moment of rashness or distress. The recent recognition of the seaman's right to quit the ship any time the anchor is down removes the last vestige of involuntary servitude under American law. It is only lately that the death blow has been given to the system of indentured coolie labor under which in the British colonies thousands of Asiatics have been bound by an enforced state-regulated contract to work for five years.

Every enlargement of personal freedom has been resisted by the powerful as a blow aimed at the foundations of society. To take away the creditor's power over the person of the insolvent debtor would, it was claimed, cut off the poor from borrowing. To set free the serf from the glebe would result in untilled fields and tramp-infested roads. To abolish the master's power to whip or jail the worker who did not serve through the period of labor agreed on would kill enterprise by legalizing strikes. To cut the lariat of debt slavery by which the planter holds the peon would cause the plantations to be abandoned, while the erstwhile peons would lead a lazy half-wild life in their shacks in the jungle. Yet none of these predictions have come true because in every case a higher type of relation was discovered. Thus, when Hawaii became a part of the United States, the Hawaiian sugar planters anticipated ruin because American law would not prevent their Japanese laborers from striking in the critical cane-cutting season and from exacting an exorbitant wage. What happened, however, was that groups of laborers entered into agreements to raise cane on shares under the planter's direction, and that adjustment, instead of being made by coercion, was brought about on a higher plane—that of partnership.

INALIENABLE RIGHTS

In the early history of contract absolute freedom to bind one's self is the badge of a free man, since any restriction upon such freedom would tend to assimilate him to the slave, who is below the level of contract. It was only after a long and terrible experience with debt slavery that the ancient lawgivers recognized that free will is not always a will to freedom and that they denied a man the

power to bind himself into tralldom or to pledge his person for the repayment of a loan.

Under the feudal system the law of contract well-nigh swallowed public law. By the oath of commendation men could destroy at a stroke their own freedom and that of their descendants. The extension of such far-reaching effect to a promise was freedom of contract gone mad.

Gradually it was found necessary to recognize in the normal individual certain powers essential to self-effectuation, of which he cannot divest himself, i.e., "inalienable rights." Hence modern law gives no force to a contract which without due equivalent cripples one's future freedom to act or to contract, e.g., to live in a certain place or outside a certain place, to marry or not to marry a certain person, not to carry on one's trade or business, not to exercise the right of franchise or to exercise it in a certain way, or to forego one's legal rights as, e.g., the passenger's right to damages for injury through the fault of a common carrier.

Society will not permit the surrender of rights essential to the public welfare. Thus in some of our states the debtor cannot waive the statutory exemptions in his favor or the mortgager his equity of redemption. Legal standard insurance policies have virtually removed insurance from the domain of contract. Personal safety is not to be contracted away; one cannot legally bind himself to engage in dangerous work or to remain in a dangerous place. Statutes clothing the worker with the right to be paid his wages in cash and the right to indemnity for injuries received in the course of his work will not allow him to contract himself out of these rights. An agreement to assign to one's employer the patents of all one's future inventions is invalid unless restricted to inventions of a particular character. The courts throw out an unlimited contract of a technical employee not to set himself up in business, not to use in the service of another knowledge of secret processes which he may have acquired in the course of his employment. In Germany there is doubt as to the validity of the clause in the contract of an apprentice binding him not to compete with his master in later life or to follow his trade within the German Empire. In all these cases, what at first glance appears a fetter on the worker's freedom

to contract is really an enlargement of his freedom, since it prevents the stronger from snatching out of the passing distress or dependence of the weaker a lasting advantage over him.

Thus we see that the celebrated assertion of the American Declaration of Independence that men "are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights" is not a "glittering generality," but the epitome of a great historic movement.

THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

Sometimes *organization* is the weapon by which the disinherited conquer for themselves a place in the sun. Collective strength may win them their first consideration from their superiors, or from officials, lawmakers, political parties, or public opinion. Unit-ing to formulate grievances, frame demands, oppose foes, reward friends, or name candidates may give political weight to a class which hitherto has been a cipher. Nor is this all. Organization opens the way to economic team work—co-operative buying, selling, shipping, or borrowing, boycott, strike, or concerted restriction of output—by which the weak, in case they are numerous, may wield a formidable power. There is, indeed, no class so humble that it cannot by hanging together hold back something its superiors want.

The strong are therefore solicitous to keep this ugly weapon out of the hands of the weak. If they dare, they crush all such lower-class organization as "conspiracy." It is not yet a century since in England combinations of workmen to raise wages or to shorten hours were punished without mercy, while over the rest of Europe anti-trade-union laws were in force half a century ago. Even yet, in many parts of the world, a strike is dealt with exactly as if it were an insurrection. The union of Irish tenants—the Land League—made the tenants so strong against their landlords that the English government ruthlessly suppressed it.

If they have to tolerate an organization of the weak, the strong try to wrest from it the means by which alone it may be made effective. They suppress picketing, outlaw the sympathetic strike, ban the strike to force out non-union men, and seize trade-union

funds to pay damages to employers caused by acts ordered by the agents of trade unions. In the same way our railroad companies at first refused to allow the farmers' grange to build a co-operative elevator beside their tracks, while a landlord's government threw Irish tenants into jail for agreeing not to take a farm from which a tenant had been unjustly evicted.

Another recourse of the strong is to circulate calumnies to blacken the character of the unions formed by the weak. They picture them as lawless—some of them are—and revolutionary. Under absolutist government they set the police on them by the cry that they mask a "political" movement. Among us farmers' unions were declared to be tainted with "agrarianism," workingmen's unions with "socialism." The secrecy of such organizations—which is but that of the ordinary business corporation—is pictured as a cloak for sinister purposes and seditious plotting. Every wild utterance of an organizer is eagerly caught up and circulated as an index to their subversive aims. The leaders of the movement are portrayed as selfish, unprincipled men, and their followers are chided for wasting their time and money on meetings and agents instead of attending quietly to their work. Only after their unions have survived this campaign of calumny and vindicated in the public eye their lawful and useful character does the weaker class reap in full the benefits which organization ought to confer.

THE DOWNWARD PERCOLATION OF CULTURE

To round out their monopoly of wealth and power the ruling minority covet a monopoly of literature and learning. Often they cultivate close relations with the literati, encourage the caste spirit in artists and scholars, and do what they can to exclude the industrial classes from the acquisition of communal treasures. There is, nevertheless, a tendency for culture to soak down among the common people, with the result of blunting the consciousness of class distinctions. The sentiment of equality among the Chinese is no doubt connected with the wide diffusion among them of Confucian ideas. The marked growth of democratic feeling among the French since the Revolution hinges in part on a permeation of the national

culture into the lower social levels, so that in urbanity, self-possession, and household decencies the workers are much like the upper classes.

The industrial classes in Cuba are so saturated with the Hispanic culture that social distinctions can scarcely be maintained. Says a Bulletin of the United States Department of Labor:

Cuba is one of the most democratic countries in the world. Nowhere else does the least-considered member of a community aspire with more serene confidence to social equality with its most exalted personage. The language, with its conventional phrases of courtesy shared by all classes, the familiar family life of proprietor and servant, master and apprentice, a certain simplicity and universality of manners inherited from pioneer days, and a gentleness of temperament that may be both climatic and racial, which shrinks from giving offense by assuming superiority of rank in intercourse with others, have all contributed to render class assumptions externally less obvious in Cuba than in most other countries where equally great differences of race, culture, and fortune exist. The Cuban is naturally self-possessed. It is difficult to fancy him having stage fright. He is so imaginative and Tarasconese that he frequently confounds ideals with realities, and as his ideal of himself is usually an exalted one, this disposition does not incline him to diffidence or humility. He is therefore apt to assume an artlessly familiar air with his employer, and to try to put their business relations, so far as their social aspect is concerned—which is to him a most important one—as nearly upon a partnership basis as possible. . . .

His friendliness toward his employer is usually well-meaning, even if unwisely manifested. It is somewhat akin to the easy, inquisitive, but sympathetic familiarity one finds in a New England village. . . .

One desirable outcome of the aspiration toward social equality on the part of Cubans is their aversion to tips. Employees who had made some money sacrifice by leaving piecework to act as guides about a factory refused, evidently with considerable embarrassment, the offer of a gratuity. A poor countryman who had left his field labor for several hours to show a trail through a tract of forest would only accept compensation under protest—and when it was turned into a gift for the children. These same men would have made as shrewd a bargain as possible and would have haggled for hours over centavos in a matter of trade, but for a service of courtesy money was no compensation for their sense of wounded dignity in accepting a gratuity.

THE DIFFUSION OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

There is a pseudo-equalization by which the hereditary superiors confronted with rich upstarts are obliged to share with them their

social power. In ancient India trade originated differences in wealth which cut across the caste system and led the Brahmins to make a sharp distinction between the very rich and the ordinary members of the third estate, who still remained a despicable caste "created for the king to devour." The new tendency found expression in the naïve words of the epic poet: "That which is called *the wealthy* is a very important member of the state; for verily a man with money is the top of all creation." As the Roman Republic garnered the spoils of conquest, the ancient patrician families were quite overtopped by the new aristocracy of wealth. With the rise of the modern state the feudal hierarchy was compromised by the creation of competing ranks by state authority. In seventeenth-century France hereditary nobility was conferred on grand counselors and officers of the chamber of accounts, on doctors, regents, and professors of law, and on judges of the higher courts; so that nobility ceased to imply the possession of a fief. Later John Law's financial schemes enriched thousands of nobodies and created a race of parvenus, who by their enormous wealth forced admittance into the noblesse, frequently intermarried with them, and so weakened the caste taboo.

During the last century the expansion of Europe has let loose upon its old land-holding nobility countless winners of new fortunes made in foreign trade, colonial exploitation, railroad building, manufacturing, and the seizure of natural wealth all over the globe—gold fields and diamond fields, mineral deposits, nitrates, forests, and water-power. Under plutocratic pressure the aristocrats have had to open their ranks and admit to the charmed circle, if not the new rich, at least their children. The thoughtless hail such cross-differentiations as if they had a democratic significance, but, in fact, the struggle to determine who shall sit highest does nothing to lessen social inequalities.

Real diffusion of economic opportunity is brought about by the leaking out of the jealously guarded secrets, the "mysteries," of the various "crafts" and arts, by the abolition of the caste requirement that the son shall follow the calling of his father, by the breaking down of gild restrictions upon entrance to the skilled occupations, and by the abandonment of the policy asserted under the

old régime in France that "the right to labor is a royal right which the prince may sell and subjects must buy." Equalizing, too, are the abolition of primogeniture and entail, and the adoption of the principle that the estates of persons who leave no will shall be divided equally among the heirs. Co-operative credit, co-operative trade, and co-operative production have a like tendency, as well as the extension of government credit to farmers and the appointment of an expert adviser to help them to get the most out of their farms. The development of skill by public vocational education as well as by free professional schools preparing youth for the higher walks make the well-paid callings more accessible.

Much depends upon the shifting ratio that "poor men's opportunities" bear to opportunities for possessors of capital and technical knowledge. The gratuitous distribution to actual settlers of some two hundred million acres of the American public domain has had an incalculable effect in raising the economic, and therewith the social, plane of millions who work with their hands. Alluvial gold deposits have yielded small fortunes to tens of thousands of "placer" miners, whereas gold occurring in ore, since it can be extracted only with the aid of elaborate machinery, has largely gone to benefit the possessors of capital. The abandonment of the simple hand-labor processes for extracting natural wealth and the growing necessity for large initial capital for success in most lines of productive enterprise appear to have greatly lessened the ratio of "poor men's opportunities" to capitalists' opportunities. At the same time the perfecting of credit institutions enables the man of proved capacity to gain earlier control of the capital which he needs and thwarts many endeavors to make business enterprises hereditary. Besides this, entrepreneur ability—so scarce as to command that exorbitant price known as "the rewards of business success"—is in the way of being made more plentiful and cheap by schools of business administration which disseminate a knowledge of the technique of such success.

THE SPREAD OF A MARGIN OF LEISURE

Again and again the crudeness of the ideas of the masses has defeated well-meant attempts to give them more voice in govern-

ment. They have been political zeros partly because of their intense preoccupation with the stern task of gaining a living. Until they win a margin of free time the words of Jesus ben Sirach hold good:

The wisdom of the scribe cometh by opportunity of leisure;
 And he that hath little business shall become wise.
 How shall he become wise that holdeth the plow,
 That glorieth in the shaft of the goad,
 That driveth oxen, and is occupied with their labors,
 And whose discourse is of the stock of bulls?
 He will set his heart upon turning his furrows;
 And his wakefulness is to give his heifers their fodder.
 So is every artificer and workmaster
 So is the smith sitting by the anvil
 So is the potter sitting at his work
 All these put their trust in their hands,
 And each becometh wise in his own work
 They shall not be sought for in the council of the people¹

But certain developments are giving the plain people time to look up from their work and to eye the common weal. Free land, bringing a cessation in the struggle for food; the coming into being of a population of iron slaves—the machines—to do man's bidding; the greater speed and concentration of labor, which call for a shorter working day—these create for the workers a margin of leisure. Well employed, this means time to read, to think, to confer together, to reach a common understanding, to organize, whereby the workers gain ability to conquer and to utilize for themselves political power.

THE DIFFUSION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Knowledge is a kind of light and it is the illumined who make their way up in the scale of life. Moreover, ignorance is the darkness in which thrive the fungi of superstition, falsehood, and prejudice, which wither in the sun. Hence social superiors endeavor always to keep under their control the instrumentalities of education.

The mediaeval church taught the children of the common people what was essential to salvation, but had no idea of educating them to rise in life. The state at first institutes universities to provide

¹ Ecclesiasticus 38. The passage is too long to quote in full.

it with trained servants, but as it gains in social purpose it pushes general education. In fact, the spirit of a government may very well be gauged by noting its policy with reference to the different grades of education. If it is generous in elementary schools but stingy in high schools, it reflects the ideas of the comfortable classes, who can pay tuition. Only when it opens an educational path to the summit for every youth able to climb the Parnassian steeps is it in the way of democratizing knowledge.

The cost of instruction is, however, but one item in the cost of an education, for the child must somehow be maintained while it is studying. The power of the bright sons of the poor to compete for the prizes of life with the sons of the well-to-do is limited by the financial inability of their parents to keep them long in school. It appears that out of 100 children who enter American city schools 45 drop out before the sixth year. Only 25 enter the high schools, and of these but 6 complete the course. The United States Commissioner of Education estimates that one-ninth of the pupils who began school in 1905 graduate from the high school, and that one in seventy will graduate from college. Since a higher education is rapidly becoming requisite for the better places in industry, government, and the professions, it is plain that free instruction goes only part of the way toward putting the children of the poor on an equal footing with the children of the well-to-do in vying for these better places. A society earnestly bent on equalizing educational opportunities would see that no capable child quit school because its parents could not support it or needed its earnings.

Nor should we lose sight of the quality of the instruction society offers the children of the ill-to-do. The public elementary schools provide one teacher for forty or fifty pupils, while the best private schools insist on one teacher to every ten or fifteen pupils. In the private high schools, which teach a considerable proportion of the children of the comfortable classes, the annual cost of the instruction furnished averages \$94 a pupil, while in the public high schools the cost is \$56 a pupil.

In a word, a society that seriously went about it to wipe out caste, in so far as it rests on differences in preparedness for one's life-work, would spend three or four times as much as Americans now spend and would take and devote to the better distribution of

knowledge a billion or two of dollars that now go for luxury, show, and vice.

THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

The possession of a vote does not endow an unlettered, ignorant man with the wit to use it to realize his ends. The diffusion of political power does not, therefore, bring government at once under the control of the broader layers of the people. But, once government responds to the will of the masses rather than to the will of the classes, there are many things it may do to soften inequalities and to prevent social advantages from becoming hereditary.

It may realize the equality of all before the law, neither riches nor poverty, neither intelligence nor ignorance, to receive consideration in the courts. It may also offer equal opportunity for citizens to serve the public according to their ability. Banishing inheritance of offices, property qualifications for office-holding, nepotism and favoritism in the award of office, it may make all offices accessible to the most competent as ascertained by impartial tests, irrespective of their party allegiance or service.

Government claims a serious fraction of the people's income, so that it is no small matter whether it taps the upper or the lower social levels. By heavy levying on luxuries and on the unearned increment, as well as by a progressive taxation of property or incomes, the peaks are made less towering. The antisocial haughtiness that, after two or three generations of divorce from hard work, grows in a family like a fungus on a dead tree may be forestalled by inheritance taxes so steeply graded as to thwart the money-maker's endeavor to endow his line for all time.

There will be fewer unearned fortunes, too, if nuggets of public wealth are not carelessly left lying about. Public forethought and care cause natural resources to yield livelihoods for many instead of fortunes for a few. The curbing of monopoly in its Protean forms by government regulation or ownership means fewer centers to poison the social body with the virus of competitive extravagance and contempt for labor.

On the other hand, the state may do much to protect the little properties—so precious in fostering family independence and self-respect—against their enemies. Wise usury laws, the suppression of "loan sharks," the regulation of pawnbroking, public pawnshops,

in some backward countries the inalienability of the cultivator's holding, have this tendency. American law has been solicitous to limit the power of the creditor over the debtor. Instances are the *homestead exemptions*, which are general in our states, *personalty exemptions*, which reserve the tools of the artisan, the library and instruments of the professional man, and the stock and implements of the farmer from seizure by the creditor, and *wage exemptions*, which often go so far as to put sixty days' wages of the head of the family beyond the reach of legal process.

Finally, the state uses means to encourage the formation of small properties. Among these are found mechanics' lien laws, the regulation of insurance companies and savings banks, postal savings banks, the fostering of savings and loan associations and other forms of co-operative endeavor, the protection of the small investors in big companies, and, in some countries suffering from land-lordism, the dissemination of large estates by special taxation, or the state purchase of such estates in order to create small proprietors.

Let it be noted, however, that only a part of the social legislation of the modern state is anticlass. Ameliorative measures, such as the provision of parks, playgrounds, and other communal means of enjoyment, public health conservation, factory inspection, workmen's compensation, social insurance, old-age pensions, legal minimum wage, and public employment bureaus make welfare more general, but do nothing to lessen those inequalities of prestige, of self-respect, and of self-assertion which underlie the hierarchy of classes.

REFLECTIVE STANDARDS OF APPRAISAL

Upper-class prestige, resting always on a more or less visible basis of fortune, is impaired to the degree that people leave behind them the juvenile or barbarian admiration for the money-maker. The upper class strives ever to propagate the idea that the rich are the virtuous, the "better" people. But critical observation indorses the conclusion of the economist and moralist, John Ruskin:

In a community regulated only by laws of demand and supply, but protected from open violence, the persons who become rich are, generally speaking, industrious, resolute, proud, covetous, prompt, methodical, sensible, unimaginative, unsensitive, and ignorant. The persons who remain poor are the entirely foolish, the entirely wise, the idle, the reckless, the humble, the thoughtful, the dull, the imaginative, the sensitive, the well-informed, the improvident,

the irregularly and impulsively wicked, the clumsy knave, the open thief, and the entirely merciful, just, and godly person.

To the degree that this view spreads, the class hierarchy is undermined.

Again, the rich and leisured are looked upon as "betters" so long as people are ruled by individual aims, for each sees them in possession of what he most covets. But in proportion as a group consciousness quickens in men, they consider the rich and leisured in relation to the welfare of the group. Strong national consciousness, for example, always weakens the sense of caste, and the merely rich are never so little worshiped as when the "we-feeling" of people is intensified by a defensive war.

Now economic development has been quietly building us into an organism with interdependent parts. Few active persons today are engaged in supplying directly the wants of their families. They are working for an indeterminate body of consumers, customers, or patrons, and hence it is easy to think of them as serving the "public" or "society," as, in effect, *social functionaries*. But from this point of view the chimney-sweep or road-mender gains in dignity, for he is rendering a service with which we cannot dispense. If he does his work skilfully and conscientiously, it is illogical to despise him.

On the other hand, from the social point of view, the envied idle rich not only have no claim to special consideration, but appear as the drones of a hive, the camp followers of an army, the stow-aways of a ship, the deadbeats of a business. Leisure, to be sure, is honorable in those who, after having fought a good fight, retire betimes to rest and enjoy. But *unearned* leisure is an altogether different thing. So far as the interests of society are concerned, the hale man who all his life does nothing to balance his account with his fellow-men is a sheer parasite. That he lives upon the income of property he has inherited does not make his position less degrading. After all, a man's account is with his own generation rather than with his forbears. What the heir consumes costs the toil and sweat of his contemporaries; so that society may well say to him, "This is what we are doing for you; now what are you doing for us?"

The scandal of able-bodied persons loafing or playing through life in the midst of their busy fellows has pierced the skin even of

the upper class, so that they are fain to justify themselves by dwelling on the various counter-services the leisured render society—their unpaid work for the public, their philanthropic services, their attention to community affairs. But, while their property claims against society are definite and enforceable at law, their obligations are vague, only such, indeed, as they choose to acknowledge. The fact is that with perhaps a twentieth part of what the leisure class costs it society might go into the market and secure services equal in worth to the services it receives from them.

The feudal king obtained a district military captain by bestowing a fief; the modern state gains an educated army officer for a small fraction of the cost of a fief. Some few castles of the Middle Ages harbored men of letters and learning; but today, if society wants a scholar, it does not leave him to seek a noble patron; it creates a professorship. In need of relief work, society no longer waits for Lady Bountiful; it calls in the retired doer or hires a trained social worker. From her nobles Europe has received much valuable public service for which she never paid, while America has paid her officeholders for much public service which she never received. Still the Europeans have paid infinitely more than the Americans for such service. We now see that to have faithful, high-minded public servants you do not need to maintain a landed aristocracy; what you have to do is to open attractive careers for trained men. In a word, the hereditary leisured have never rendered society a service which cannot now be had on far better terms from salaried, qualified workers.

Private property is a social-welfare institution because the hope of acquiring property powerfully stimulates the economic activities of the capable. But when accumulations are so handed on as to create generations of drones and butterflies, they are not a blower but a damper. Hence, just as inheritable functions, offices, and privileges have been abolished with good results, inheritable great fortunes will be made impossible. Not that a son may not inherit enough of his father's wealth to live on, but that no one may inherit a fortune so large as to kill in him all incentive to work and to tempt him into an extravagance of expenditure and conduct which discourages or corrupts the useful members of society.